

MEMORANDUM

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21 December 1943

From: Lieutenant Sterling J. Nicholson.
To: Commander Vaughn Bailey.

Subject: Preliminary work done on Contact Register.

1. On 12 November 1943, Colonel Clement of Admiral Stark's Staff presented his views to the JISPB with regard to the establishment of a Contact Register that would be a combination of all existent registers in this country.

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2. Lieutenant Nicholson was instructed to investigate the present status of Contact Registers in this country. He found a multitude of so called registers containing from fifty to fourteen thousand names. In addition to those actually uncovered by Lt. Nicholson he has hearsay evidence of numerous others. The principal contacts made by this officer were; ONI, OEW, and MIS (G-2). All personnel interviewed were unanimous in the opinion that a Central Register should be established, due to the knowledge that extensive duplication must exist in all Registers, plus the fact that no one agency is aware of all other registers. To illustrate - ONI might want information from a particular individual who is listed by OSS - OEW Foreign Expert File in New York City; however, ONI is unaware of the existence of this file. It is a fact that not one of the Intelligence Services is acquainted in full, with all registers. To mention a few, they are:

OSS - OEW - [REDACTED] - Foreign Experts
MIS - Branch Officers
War Manpower Commission
Smithsonian Institute - Ethno-geographic Board
Department of Justice - Bureau of Immigration and
Naturalization
Library of Congress
The Treasury Department
Securities and Exchange Commission
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce

STATINTL

3. In the opinion of Lt. Nicholson these various registers can be brought together, duplication eliminated, and a Central Register established by the JISPB for the combined use of all the Services. It would be a task of considerable magnitude and would require a staff of some twenty persons to function in an efficient manner.

4. In conclusion, the need for a Central Register is best illustrated by the following:

(a) At great cost, in personnel and money involved, as many as five different services have interviewed the same individual, at different times. In all probability, a writer preparing a study of the Country involved, would want to interview this same person, thereby voiding the previous efforts, as far as the preparation of a strategic study is concerned.

(b) Filing systems, and methods of obtaining information, are in the main most inefficient - due to the fact that the various registers have developed without plan, or any particular direction. As the usual thing, some individual recognized the need, and, of his own volition, has attempted the establishment of a file. The result is, as indicated beforehand.

Sterling Nicholson